

"HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN IRELAND." By John Fleetwood, M.B.,
D.P.H. (Pp. xvi + 420. Plates 17. 21s.). Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 1951.

DOCTOR FLEETWOOD has apparently spent some happy years in browsing through the medical archives of Ireland, and has presented to us a book which is not without interest, although, in his own words, it is "not an exhaustive account of Irish medical practice throughout the centuries." The opening chapters dealing with earlier history are full of interest and pleasantly written. We find that he has referred quite frequently to articles which have appeared in this Journal, which, "contrary to the expectations of many, was quite successful, and attracted contributions from outside the Six Counties." He does not make it very clear who the many were who entertained such poor hopes for our success. In his account of the Belfast Medical School he singles out for special mention Sir William Whitla and Dr. Henry MacCormac. It would have been better if Doctor Fleetwood had confined his attention entirely to that part of Ireland which is now the Republic. His account of the first World War is mainly concerned with the offer of Trinity College to give a civilian unit to the British Red Cross Society, and with the Staffing of the 88th General Hospital at Boulogne with relays of medical officers from Dublin. He pays a warm tribute to the members of the profession who refused to comply with the "orders issued by the Government departments that all cases of bullet-wounds should be reported to the police by the hospitals and doctors concerned," during the Irish Rebellion of 1919/1921. Almost three pages are devoted to the creation and organisation of the Army Medical Corps of the Republic. Brief reference is made to the war of 1939/45, except to say that "it brought profound changes to the lives of Irish medical men. The rapid wastage of medical manpower in England provided a ready market for our doctors. Unfortunately, many of the posts offered were 'for the duration, with an uncertain future ahead.' Nevertheless, more Irish doctors than ever went abroad to civilian and military posts." There is, therefore, little or nothing in his book in praise of the gallant and devoted members of our profession who risked, and, in so many cases, gave their lives in aid of the suffering and the dying, and in loyalty to the cause which they knew to be just. It is for this reason that we feel that Doctor Fleetwood has dismally failed to present a true account of the history of medicine in Ireland.

R. M.

WILLIAM SMELLIE, The Master of British Midwifery. By R. W. Johnstone,
C.B.E., M.A., M.D., LL.D. (Pp. viii + 139. Figs. 30. 20s.). Edinburgh:
E. & S. Livingstone, 1952.

In writing this book the author describes it as "a most enjoyable task," and to read it has been a great pleasure. It is presented in a most attractive and instructive manner as one would expect from Professor R. W. Johnstone, and supplies a need which has been felt by many obstetricians who have been unable to secure Glaister's book for their libraries. It has the additional advantage of including the new material from Dr. Peter Camper's *Travel Journey*.

Smellie's life has been described by the author as a bridge "carrying us from the days of crude, blundering medieval midwifery to the beginning of that science and art of obstetrics which has been opening out ever since." What a word picture Johnstone has given us of that bridge.

The part of the book which deals with the Treatise is so clearly displayed that, as the author says, it is unnecessary to have Smellie's writings before him, but what a pleasure it is to follow Johnstone's interpretations with McClintock's New Sydenham edition beside one when reading this section.

Every obstetrician reading this book should feel humble, will realise the debt his art owes to Smellie, but should feel encouraged by the fact that his great contributions were the result of close clinical observations independent of modern scientific facilities.

It is a book which should be read by every member of the profession interested in obstetrics.

This attractive, well illustrated book is presented to us in the way one has become accustomed to expect from Messrs. Livingstone, and both the author and publishers are to be congratulated.

C. H. G. M.